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WAR FOOD ADMINISTRATION
5 So. Wabash Avenue
Chicago 3, Illinois

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HOUSEHOLD FAT SALVAGE PROGRAM

FACT SHEET

HISTORY:

Late in 1941 and early in 1942 a number of states began and conducted programs for the salvage of used household fats. One of the most successful of these programs was conducted in Chicago, in January, 1942. The success of the program in Chicago and in several other communities made it evident that it would be possible to salvage large quantities of used household fats if a nation-wide program were conducted. Therefore, early in 1942, Secretary Wickard issued a directive to the Salvage Division of the WPB, authorizing that agency to attempt to expand the salvage of household fats on a nation-wide basis. The Salvage Division of the WPB realized that such an operation would require both intensive and extensive effort on the part of their own staff, and the full cooperation of the industry. This cooperation resulted in the formation of the American Fat Salvage Committee. This committee, industry supported, not only is largely responsible for arrangements with renderers, but carries on an intensive program of paid advertising.

In the beginning, and for about two years, the WPB, in cooperation with industry, spearheaded the fat salvage program. Their combined efforts resulted in hundreds of millions of pounds of salvaged fats being made available to the war effort. Recently, however, WPB functions in connection with this program were transferred to the War Food Administration. The WFA now has assumed responsibility for the program in the field, although WPB State and Local Salvage committees will continue to assist in the work. The collection channels built up during the past two years through such committees are functioning smoothly, and WFA's chief task will be maintenance of these collection channels, expediting and assisting in collections, rural and urban, wherever it becomes necessary.

USES:

Salvaged fats go into a pool of tallow and greases which supplies raw material for soaps and industrial uses, including lubricants, synthetic rubber, and other rubber processing, and textile and leather products. As long as imports of fats are so far below normal, and so long as military and other unusual demands are at high levels, the acquisition of every additional pound of reclaimed fats, as well as avoidance of waste in the use of products made wholly or partly from fats, are genuine contributions to our whole war economy.

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Products of used kitchen fats are explosives for rockets, anti-aircraft guns, anti-tank guns, howitzers, trench and chemical mortars, airplane cannon, dynamite, etc. Products of used kitchen fats are also found in military medicines, such as sulfa ointments, acriflavine, proflavine, smallpox vaccines, insulin, surgical jellies, and nicotine acid.

Other military uses are in such items as synthetic rubber, airplane lubricants, depth-charge releases, incendiaries, de-icing fluids for airplanes, nylons for parachutes, powder bags, etc., high-resistant paints, fabrics of all kinds, marine rope, military and naval soaps, hydraulic fluids, etc.

The single war unit requiring the most fat in its production is the pontoon bridge. A ten-ton bridge of this type uses 3,200 pounds of synthetic rubber. In making this rubber, 171 pounds of fat are required.

One tank car of used household fats (60,000 pounds will provide the ingredients for 240,000 anti-aircraft shells (37mm) or the alkyd resin paint for 1,200 medium tanks or 30,000 pounds of dynamite, or the annual pharmaceutical supplies for a 2,000-bed hospital.

Why Continue Collection of Used Fats?

No matter what happens in Europe, the defeat of Germany means we are only half way to victory and the need for used fats will continue to be just as great until sometime after the conclusion of the Japanese war.

Fats are tremendously important to industrial and military production since approximately three out of four civilian items require fats in their manufacture and this proportion is still higher insofar as military and naval equipment is concerned.

American housewives have done a grand job in making the kitchen a part of the battle front, but recent surveys indicate that only one out of seven is doing a 100% job of salvaging fat. If every housewife in the country participated and really scraped to turn in every possible drop, collections would be at approximately three times the present rate.

FAT SALVAGE FACTS:

Here are some points which might be helpful in preparation of material to stimulate used fat collections:

1. Women think that the government wants only their so called "clean" fats. This is erroneous. Dark or smelly fats have not lost their usefulness and they are worth salvaging.

2. Some women make hard work of the operation. Nearly one-third don't even keep the salvage container in the kitchen. Only 11% keep a receptacle on the back of the stove.

3. Many women don't recognize the poundage (and the extra red points) to be obtained from saving and melting down solid fats trimmed from meats, both before and after cooking and by rendering out the fat left on the family's dinner plates.

4. With most housewives, saving fats has not yet become an automatic operation. They don't think to skim the stews and soups or to really scrape the broiler pan, roasting pan, or skillet.

Remember -- American housewives are asked by their country to turn in at least 230 million pounds of used kitchen fats this year.

The color of grease turned in by the housewife is relatively unimportant. Renderers have indicated that dark grease, when refined, besides containing ALL the essential by-products, can be used commercially. There is no justification, for a meat dealer or other fat collection station refusing to pay the full price or number of points to homemakers turning in dark grease.

Care should be taken by the housewife, however, to remove all water, bones, and other bits of foreign matter before turning in their fats, since such impurities cause rapid deterioration of fats and limit their value.

PROBLEMS:

Problems under the fat salvage program are generally those of collection, with either (a) the local grocer reluctant to accept fats the housewife has saved, or (b) problems of the retailer or meat dealer in getting the fats picked up by renderers or independent collectors. Settling such problems through cooperative efforts with renderers, meat dealers, and other groups, such as local and state salvage committees, will be WPA's responsibility in the field.

Since shortage of tires, gasoline, and various other transportation problems have occasionally made rural pick-up of salvaged fats difficult, meat dealers have sometimes been reluctant to handle fats in those areas.

To bridge this gap, the Railway Express Agency has arranged to accept shipments of used fats in leak-proof containers at any one of its 23,000 points. Certain large, metropolitan cities are excepted, however. Such shipments must weigh at least 48 pounds. Renderers will supply dealers with such containers, and will pay shipping charges to and from their plants, reimbursing meat dealers at the rate of five cents and two red points per net pound of fat shipped. (Housewives, of course, are paid four cents and two red points per pound for fat they turn in).

POSTER SUPPLIES:

The WPA has available a supply of posters, stickers, and other visual aids for use in connection with this program. Sample kits are available at all WPA Office of Supply field offices. Although much of this material was issued previously by the WFB, its use is still thought valuable. Many collection stations will need clean posters from time to time.

QUOTAS:

Quotas will no longer be used to guide housewives in each state. The need for fats is so acute that instead of setting up quotas, we're simply asking for all housewives to turn in all the fats they can --- and in this way, help shorten the war by insuring that our fighting men will have all the backing they need to do the job.

COLLECTIONS:

In most areas collections are made from retail stores (usually meat markets) on a regular schedule by renderers, known as "Master Collectors." The OPA sets up a bank of points for these renderers and collectors for their use in paying points to the retailer. Reports made by renderers each month to the OPA are the basis for further allotment of points from the OPA.

COOPERATING AGENCIES:

OPA - In December, 1943, OPA authorized a payment of two red points per pound for salvaged household fats to housewives and boardinghouse keepers. OPA also established a price of four cents per pound for salvaged household fats, this price to be paid by the local grocer. OPA continues to have full responsibility for ration points for salvaged fats, and the price paid.

WPB - The War Production Board conducted the Fat Salvage Program from April, 1942 to October, 1944. While the operating authority has been transferred to the War Food Administration, the Salvage Division of the WPB --- at all levels --- national, state and local --- continues an active cooperator. This cooperation consists of assisting in promotion, and in solving problems.

EXTENSION - Cooperation of the Extension Service of the WFA has been asked in stimulating collections of used household fats in rural and farm areas, through use of county agents and county home demonstration agents, in the course of their regular contacts and meetings.

(Marketing Reports Division, Midwest Region, WFA)